273 when the drink excites them too much and infuriates them. In this
579 way many wounds and deaths are avoided, yet in spite of it they are frequent."

273 "The fruit which they most commonly use to make their brews
221 is the algarrobo pod, which is quite sweet and nutritious and probably the most abundant fruit in those regions. When the season for this fruit is in the offing it would seem that new life, happiness and pleasure are born, and the Indians prepare for it by putting on a show to get everyone to make ready for the coming of the happy and much sighed for season."

222 "To this effect, when the pods of the algarrobo start to turn
533 yellow they place a wooden mortar in front of their dwellings, and
●789 cover it with a half tanned sheep skin or the skin of some other animal. One of them, with a piece of cord or leather thong bound about his waist from which hang a number of shells, horns and small bones, and other things which will make a little noise, starts [601] to pound with a small stick on the mortar, which they call pimpin and which takes the place of a drum. This drummer accompanies the blows dealt to the pimpin with divers body movements, half dancing but rooted to the spot, in such a manner that the objects which hang from his waist make a tambourine-like sound, something like the rattling of empty nutshells; singing meanwhile out loud but in a sad monotonous way—one would say that they fear some great calamity or are asking for help in a grim battle. The fact of the matter is that day and night, without ceasing, the low hollow sounds of the pimpin must be made, together with the rattling of the wild tambourine and the shouts or lamentations of the sorrowful singer—and all this they say is to bring about the quicker and better ripening of the desired fruit. That is why, when the singer-musician tires, another immediately replaces him.

342 "The houses of the Matacos are altogether too small and uncomfortable, but they make them so on purpose for they are thus able to husband time and fatigue, preferring ease in building to living comfort. They cut a couple of saplings or thin branches, bend them and stick the ends into the ground in the form of two crossed arches, tie a few handsful of straw to them and the house is finished. The entrance is low and narrow and one must enter on all fours. The appearance of the hut is that of an oven two or three yards in diameter. If the cutting of a few boughs looms difficult to them, then they cut several canes,

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK 6

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or whom she only wants for a temporary lover. Above all she wants as a husband a man who treats her well and possesses the qualities necessary to support the future family. Since the Choroti to a great extent live by fishing, skill in this art is naturally reckoned among a man's most praiseworthy qualities. Importance is also attached to skill in gardening and hunting. Consequently, when a young man is courting a girl, he tries to gain her favour by presenting her with fish in abundance. I was told that when several men are courting the same girl — which naturally is often the case — the man who brought her the largest quantities of fish had the greatest chance of gaining preference.

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Thus among the Choroti, marriage is from a man's point of view an important matter. When the parents send out their young son to take part in the dances and to find a wife, they follow his undertaking with the keenest interest. Every evening the father shakes his magical rattle gourd (*pelíte*) in order to promote his son's enterprise and »hurry on» the girls on his behalf. When the rattle gourd is used for such practical purposes the ceremony is called *nekeńlitse símă*, which literally means: »to shake the rattle to get (or obtain) something».

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Apart from these ceremonies in connection with courtship, there are no particular marriage rites, except the necessary drinking-bout which accompanies all family feasts and in which only the men take part. The young couple are without any further ceremony regarded as married, but marriage is not fully complete until a child is born.

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Among the *Mataco*, marriages are not particularly contracted in connection with the dances, but conditions are the same as among the Choroti in so far as the women play the active part both as concerns incidental amorous relations and marriages proper. The great drinking-feasts during the algaroba season are the occasions when a woman enters into temporary or permanent relation with a man. When the men are intoxicated, the girls avail themselves of the opportunity, seize the youths whom they like by the hands and take them to their houses where they spend the night with them. These liaisons lead in many cases to real marriages.

M 585 789 535

When marriage is agreed upon, it is celebrated with the usual ceremonies which have a religious significance. The drum, the most important magical instrument of the Mataco, is beaten the whole night with a view to keeping off evil spirits from the couple. Similarly, a ceremonial dance, called *Nahútsak*, is performed in the evening. It is a ring-dance much like the marriage dance *Avúshe* of the Choroti. The couple being married are seated in the middle of the ring and their friends dance and chant around

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

them. The aim of the dance is partly to protect the former against supernatural dangers, an idea generally associated with the Indian ring-dances. But in addition, it seems to have special reference to marriage, for it is supposed in some mysterious way to influence the marriage candidates favourably. On this particular point, however, I did not receive further information from the Indians.

Lastly, we have to consider the marriage customs of the *Tobas*. The Tobas are generally monogamous for the simple reason that it is difficult for an ordinary man to maintain several wives and a large family, but there are exceptions to this rule. Polygamy is, however, allowed by custom, and if a Toba considers himself rich enough and has an opportunity of getting wives, it is of no rare occurrence that he marries two, three, or more women, who generally live in different villages owing to the jealousy they entertain for each other. This kind of polygamy is especially found among the great chiefs. Thus the famous cacique Taycolique has had in all ten wives. One has died, he has divorced five, and at the time of my stay among the Tobas he had four wives. Such great chiefs frequently separate themselves from their wives only for the sake of marrying some younger and prettier woman. The children of a divorced wife have not the same rights as the children of her supplanter, and if the eldest son is born of such a wife he cannot become chief on the death of his father; in this case the eldest son of the new wife will inherit the chieftainship. The father, however, does not break completely with the children of a divorced wife if they are adult, but maintains relations with them, and they sometimes visit their father.

Among the Tobas, as among most Chaco tribes, pre-nuptial chastity is almost unknown, great sexual liberty being allowed both boys and girls before marriage. As soon as a girl is marriageable, that is, has passed her first menstruation, she may choose casual lovers, and generally she does not fail to make use of her freedoom. Although in some parts of the country, the sexual liberty of the Toba girls seems to have degenerated into prostitution, there is no doubt that the social morality of the people has approved of this custom since ancient times. The young men and women meet at the dances, some of which, among the Tobas as among the Choroti, are intimately connected with the sexual life. The girls cannot, however, as among the Choroti, take the initiative in contracting marriage.

When a Toba man has found a girl whom he likes and wants for his

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 S17 Mataco S17
Toba S112
Choroti SK6

M 304 inflammation in the face the girl has to fast for some days after the operation.

M 304 751 Tattooing has a purely magical significance, as may be inferred from the fact that the Mataco and the Choroti women regard it particularly as a protection against disease. Analyzing the custom, we can distinguish at least three factors in it, all of which are associated with magical ideas: first, the scarification or bleeding itself; second, the matter (soot, ashes) rubbed into the wounds; and third, the patterns and marks incised which remain when the wounds have healed. Bleeding and scarification are common practices of purely magical significance among all Indians of South America, and as far as the Pilcomayo tribes are concerned I shall have occasion to mention this custom again in a later chapter. The very scars left after such operations are regarded as a protection against evil spirits. Further, that tattooing is done by means of ashes or soot is certainly not an accident. The use of ashes for superstitious purposes is of frequent occurrence among the Indians, the general idea being that ashes are a prophylactic against evil spirits. The custom of mixing ashes or soot with saliva is significant from the same point of view, for magical virtues are commonly ascribed to the saliva.

M [789] M [827]

C 304 751 789 All women among the Choroti are tattooed in the same way, that is, have the same marks and patterns applied to the face, and no full-grown woman lacks this tribal characteristic. Since tattooing is regarded as a permanent protection against evil spirits and sickness, it is natural that a woman lacking it should be shunned by the men, but it is not a means of attraction or a »decoration» in the common sense of the word.

T 304 184 [302] As to the *T o b a s*, tattooing or the custom of making indelible marks on the body or the face was formerly in vogue among all Toba tribes as among all peoples of the Guaycurú-group; but the Bolivian Tobas of the present day have dropped this custom, contenting themselves with simple body painting. Tattooing among the Tobas seems to have been limited to the female sex, as indeed is the rule among the Chaco tribes. According to d'Orbigny, the Toba girls were tattooed when they attained puberty and became marriageable. Since the custom is no longer practised by the Bolivian Tobas I have not seen how it is done by them. The procedure, however, is the same as among other Chaco tribes, incisions being made in the face and ashes rubbed into the wounds. As appears from the photographs of some Toba women which Dr. Lehmann-Nitsche took in Buenos Aires in 1899 the tattooing practised by the Toba women was exceedingly elaborate and complicated.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

The Tobas call the spirit *peyák noin* or *nõtta*,[1]) the Mataco *aitták slahsa is*, the Choroti *mõhsek eis*, and the Ashluslay *sitché is*. The spirit is thus identical with the vital power or the principle of life in the plants, just as the spirit or spiritual power which animates man is the principle of life and growth in the human body. The same belief is held of cultivated plants such as the pumpkin, maize, manioc, and the water melon. Of these the Tobas at any rate appreciate the water melon most, because from this fruit, just as from the fruits of the wild plants, they brew an intoxicating drink of mysterious power.

The most important of the forest trees is the algaroba, the value of which from an alimental point of view has already been mentioned. The algaroba season begins in November and lasts until the end of January, and is therefore impatiently awaited by the natives, and they try to »hurry on» its coming by various magical means. The Mataco and the Choroti, for instance, are in the habit of beating the drum every night for about one month previous to the commencement of the »season», in order, as they say, to expel the evil demons who prevent the fruit from reaching maturity, but also with a view to directly influencing the spirit (*aitták* or *mõhsek*) which is believed to animate the tree. During the »season» the drum — at any rate among the Choroti — is beaten even in the day-time. Thus, it is believed, the trees will be influenced to continue producing fruit in abundance. The Tobas again, perform a special dance with the same object, beginning some time before the fruit ripens and continuing this ceremonial dance during the whole algaroba season.

But the Chaco Indians not only appreciate the algaroba and other fruits as *food*, but above all because of the *intoxicating drinks* they prepare from them. We should know little of the religion of these Indians if we did not know the religious ideas associated with these sacred drinks and the drinking-feasts, which in the summer months form perhaps the most salient feature of their social life.

The magical power which is commonly ascribed to intoxicating drinks is, according to Indian belief, due to the very spirit which animates the plant and is specially present in its fruit. The plant spirit reaches its highest point of actuality and concentration when the drink brewed from its fruit has fermented, for fermentation is to the Indian

[1]) *Nõtta* (= *noin'ta*) is a comparative form of the word *nóin*, 'good', but is generally used by the Bolivian Tobas in a positive sense. The Argentine Tobas, on the other hand, more commonly use the word *noin*.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Chapter XIV.

Religious rites and ceremonies.

As I have pointed out, magical conjurations play the most important part in the religious life of the Chaco Indians. These conjurations are of different kinds, according to the different occasions on which they take place, or the particular purposes for which they are performed. In some cases the Indians simply try to frighten the evil spirits away by shouting and making a noise with instruments of some kind; in other cases they try to render them harmless by coërcing and compelling them. But the Indians also have recourse to magical conjurations with rattles, drums, dancing, etc. to influence good and beneficent spirits, for instance those animating certain trees and plants, or with a view to producing certain effects in nature or in the world of human beings merely on the principle of sympathetic magic. On the other hand, there is also a sort of worship, inasmuch as prayers are addressed to the individual guardian spirits in trouble and distress, and these prayers may, at least among the Tobas, be accompanied by offerings. 789

Those practices which may be referred to the category of »conjurations» apparently play the most important part. Being mostly performed by means of magical instruments of some kind, they are at any rate the most conspicuous. Prayers to a great extent escape observation and are kept more secret than other religious ceremonies.

1. Magical ceremonies to cure sickness.

We know already the general theory of disease held by the Chaco Indians. Most bodily evils from which the Indians suffer are, according to their belief, due to witchcraft, which implies that the illness has been sent by a human enemy, generally a malignant sorcerer. In this 753

[p. 131]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

755 535 placed in their midst .... The spectators remained to do honour to the treatment and increase its efficacy, but not without fear that the *ahút*, on quitting the body of the sick man might enter into theirs.[1])

This savage dance was typical of the Indian dances as far as they have the character of magical conjurations. The Indians firmly believe that they can terrify and expel the evil demon who has taken possession of the patient by violent movements and menacing gestures such as those just described. As to the ostrich feathers which the sorcerers had fastened to ankles, wrists, head and waist, some words of explanation may be added. The feather ornaments which the Indians wear in most of their dances and conjurations are not real ornaments but magical charms which eke out the powers emanating from the whole personality of the sorcerer. Like body-paintings, necklaces made of animals' teeth, rattle bells and gourds etc. they effectively help in conjuring the evil spirits.

The following is a conjuration accompanied by dancing which I myself witnessed in a Mataco village in the Bolivian Gran Chaco. Two Indian sorcerers were trying to cure a horse which was evidently badly attacked by an *aittáh* or *nahút*. The cure took place on various successive nights in an open place outside the *tolderia*. One of the sorcerers chanted in the usual way with his closed hand laid on the neck of the sick horse; the other both chanted and danced. Stamping with the feet alternately on the ground to the measure of his chant, he moved some ten steps away from the horse and then back again, repeating these movements several times. In his hand he held the rattle which he shook incessantly as an accompaniment to his dance and chanting. During the dance the man now and then took up a pebble or a small stick from the ground and threw it into the forest, spitting at the same time vigorously in the same direction. On the path where he moved he had laid some live embers. After a while the sorcerer interrupted his dance, stood close to the horse by the side of his colleague, and shaking the rattle heartily over the animal he shouted several times in a loud voice: *yame! yame! yame!*, that is to say, »go out, go out, go out!» These were the only words uttered during the whole conjuration. During his chanting the 755 sorcerers only pronounced refrains such *hō, hō, hō, a, a, a*, and so forth. 533 The tune which the dancer again and again repeated and accompanied with his rattle was the following:

[1]) Pelleschi, *Otto mesi nel Gran Ciacco*, p. 140.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SI46

Chapter XIV.

2. Other kinds of conjuration.

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From what has been stated above of the social customs of the Chaco Indians, we realize that there is hardly any important event in the life of these natives which is not celebrated with religious or magical ceremonies of some kind. Generally these ceremonies are simple: drumming, the shaking of rattles, dancing and chanting form the main features in all of them. A few words may be said in this connection about the magical instruments, the *drum* and the *rattle*.

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The drum, which is called *usyúk* by the Choroti, *huitsyúk* by the Mataco and *kaltaki* by the Tobas, is known to all Pilcomayo tribes, although it is nowadays little used by the Bolivian Tobas. It is a simple instrument, consisting of a small clay pot which is covered with a goat's or deer's skin. In beating the drum only one stick is used. Generally the pot is partly filled with water — a detail which I cannot exactly account for, since it has no perceptible influence upon the tone of the instrument. Probably the water is believed to eke out in some way its magical efficacy. The drum is the principal magical instrument of the Argentine Mataco who use the rattle gourd less, whereas, on the other hand, the Choroti, who also use both instruments, seem to appreciate the rattle more. In a Mataco village the drum is at work nearly every day: sometimes the spirit of a dead Indian is frightened away with it, sometimes other evil spirits, disease-spirits, spirits of hurricanes, tempests, drought, etc. are conjured with it; sometimes the Indians try to influence the good spirits animating trees and plants with it, so as to effect an abundant harvest of algaroba and chañar. The Choroti again mainly use the drum during the algaroba season, when the instrument is beaten both day and night. In a Choroti village where I lived for several months, an Indian sorcerer was specially engaged for this important ceremony.

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The object of the drumming was to »hurry on» the ripening of the algaroba and the chañar fruits, and at the same time to frighten away the evil spirits of hurricanes and tempests which frequently blight these trees at the time when they are flowering. Drought is another great danger to a rich algaroba and chañar harvest. By means of drumming the demons, who cause drought by keeping rain back, are conjured. In some cases it seems as if the drumming Indian, by the very time in which he is beating his drum, were imitating the fall of the rain-drops. The Choroti drummer seldom wears the rattle-belt (*tahús*), which on the other hand seems to be regarded as indispensable by the Mataco drummer. The latter, when he is beating the drum, continually moves his body up and down and from one side to the other in order that the rattle which he wears round the waist may make a noise.

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The other of the two principal magical instruments of the Chaco Indians is the rattle gourd, called *poketá* by the Tobas, *votsotáh* by the Mataco, and *pelīte* by the Choroti. It consists of a round or oval bottle-gourd, hollowed out through a small opening in the tapering stem, and then filled with dry seeds, generally of tusca, small shells, beads, or other things producing a rattling sound. The outside is often ornamented with lines, triangles, squares, or other geometric designs. The instrument, when shaken, is believed to have a remarkable »power», which is partly due to the magical properties of the gourd itself, partly to the seeds or other things with which it is filled, partly to the geometric figures with which the outside of the gourd is ornamented. The instrument is used much on the same occasions and for the same purposes as the drum. I have stated, however, that the *Choroti* not only use the *pelīte* to frighten away or conjure evil spirits in general, but also for certain positive ends. To shake the rattle is in the Choroti language called *nekeālitse;* when it is shaken for a special purpose they use the expression *nekeālitse sīmā*, which means more or less: »to shake the rattle to obtain something». Thus I have mentioned that during the marriage and courtship dances such young men as are despised by the girls are in the habit of shaking their rattles in order to »hurry on» the latter and to have greater success in love. Similarly, when a young man goes out to find a bride in connection with the dances, his father at home continually shakes the rattle to »hurry on» the girls on behalf of his son and promote his important undertaking. There are many other instances of the same kind. When the Choroti women go out in the forest in the morning to collect algaroba beans for the brewing of the sacred beer or other wild

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grew faster and faster, and the chanting accompanying them louder and louder. Soon he seized his magical instrument, the bell rattle called *heligday*, and shook it at first slowly and gradually faster, keeping time with his steps. When the dance reached its culmination, the feet of the dancer moved with intense rapidity, the chanting developed into an inarticulate yelling, and the man seemed to be in a real state of ecstasy. The other men also began to take part in the dance, accelerating their movements as well as their chanting gradually like the principal dancer, and accompanying themselves with their rattles. In this way the noisy performance was continued for several hours. Its object, as the Indians told me, was to promote the ripening of the chañar fruit. The dance seemed to have particular reference to the fruits already gathered, since the effect of all similar Indian dances usually follows on the principle of *pars pro toto*. The Indians evidently believe that the fast movements of the dancer in connection with the chanting and rattling are able to exert a mysterious influence upon the spirit animating the fruit, and the influence is not limited to the fruits gathered at the moment, but according to magical principles is believed to be extended to all plants of the species.

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Similarly the *Mataco* try to promote the processes of nature by dancing. Typical of this was a dance which Mataco and Choroti Indians once arranged in common at the sugar factories in northern Argentine, where they were employed as labourers to cut the cane. The dance was a kind of *Nahütsak* the object of which was to hurry on the ripening of the sugar plant. The Bolivian Mataco, some of which cultivate the sugar cane, are known to perform this magic dance in their own land too. A bundle of sugar canes, tied together, was held by two Indians in an erect position on the ground. Round these men the other Indians formed a circle. The women joined in, forming a larger circle behind the men, All started to dance, moving round the canes, stamping alternately with their feet on the ground and chanting with a loud voice, keeping time with their steps.

This magical dance to promote the growth of the sugar cane is obviously based on the same principle as the Toba dance just mentioned: the few canes round which the Mataco Indians performed their dance represented the whole field of sugar cane. The idea evidently underlying the rite was that after these specimens of the plant had been properly prepared — *i. e.* the indwelling spirit influenced in the desired direction — the rest of the canes in the fields were likewise favourably influenced.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
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A peculiarity of the *Nomí* is that it is the only Toba dance which takes place in the day-time; in fact, it is *always* performed during the day, just as other dances are always performed at night. Of the reason of this I am not quite sure, but it is probably to be sought in the particular character of the dance. Most Indian dances are in their nature conjurations of evil spirits, and since these spirits move about especially at night, it is conceivable that the dances are, as a rule, night ceremonies. The dance *Nomí* again, chiefly has for its object the promotion of fertility and the ripening of the algaroba fruit and therefore takes place in the day, just as the Choroti dances, in so far as they have the same object, often take place in the day. It is true that the *Nomí* is also intended to conjure the ghosts of the dead, but these differ from other spirits precisely in that they are generally believed to visit their living relatives in the day-time, when the drinking-feasts are celebrated.

The Mataco also have their festival dance, which in their language is called *Nakātin* or *Katináh*. It corresponds exactly to the Toba dance *Nomí*, and is performed during the algaroba season with the same object, namely, to secure an abundant harvest and to keep off the spirits of the dead, called *kasītah* by the Mataco.

Whether the Mataco have been influenced in this festival dance by their neighbours the Tobas, with whom they have considerable intercourse, I cannot say, but the idea that the dead like to visit the living at the time of the harvest and at the great drinking-feasts, is certainly familiar to many South American tribes. Thus the *Avas* and the *Chané*, who now live on the western border of the Chaco, but came originally to these regions from the north and cannot be reckoned among the Chaco tribes proper especially practise dancing at their drinking-feasts. Since on this particular point there is an interesting analogy between the customs of the Avas and those of the Chaco tribes, I shall mention what I know about the drinking-feasts of the Avas and the Chané. Their sacred drink is maize beer, called *cangūi* in the Guarani language, which exactly corresponds to the sacred beers brewed from the algaroba and some other fruits in the Chaco. The *cangūi* festivals of the Avas as well as the dance performed in connection with them have been described by the Catholic missionaries, but none of them seems to have realized the religious significance of these ceremonies. The majority of these Indians are now Christians in name and strongly influenced by Christian civilization, having consequently dropped or greatly modified many of their ancient customs. I myself have only witnessed their

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

assemble in great quantities in a limited area, so that the fishing men will be able to catch them easily with their nets.

In this magical dance we easily recognize the same principle as for instance in the Choroti dance *Avúshe*, when the young men try to »hurry on» the girls by dancing and chanting around them. In the dance *Siyúhs*, the live fish, which is the direct object of the ceremony, evidently represents the rest of the fish in the river, which consequently, according to the principles of homoeopathic magic, is favourably influenced.

A few general words may be added as to dancing and chanting as magical rites. The Chaco Indians ascribe great efficacy to the singing or chanting which accompanies nearly all their magical and religious ceremonies. We have also seen that in this kind of conjuration as a rule no words are uttered; the »power» lies in the voice itself, being an emanation of the general magical power which, according to Indian belief, is inherent in the human body itself. It is exactly the same with the rhythmical movements of the body carried out in dancing, by which a part of the energy latent in the organism, so to speak, is released into actuality. Combined with the chanting and with the powerful sounds of drums and rattles, they are believed to act irresistibly upon supernatural beings.

But there is one more idea connected with dancing. One of the leading principles in the Indian conjurations is the principle of *imitation*. By imitating a person or a supernatural being in his movements, voice, or external appearance the magician believes that he can get hold of his soul or essence and thus be able to control him completely. Now, as a matter of fact, the Chaco Indians believe that *the evil spirits themselves dance* when at night they approach the villages in order to visit their inhabitants with sickness and misfortune. This idea is rightly expressed by Pelleschi with special reference to the Argentine Mataco, when he says of the *ahút* among other things: »These spirits . . . fly with the wind, following it and producing the same sounds as the storm; they dance in a ring round the tolderias (villages) or round the toldos (huts) of the persons whom they want to harm».[1]) This statement applies to all Chaco Indian beliefs. Since the natives fancy that dancing is the favourite way in which the spirits move, it is in accordance with their magical ideas that they should try to keep them back and counteract their evil influences by performing the same sort of movements, and in general by imitating their manners as faithfully as possible.

[1]) Pelleschi, *Los indios Matacos y su lengua*, p. 94.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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CHAPTER XVII.

Magical ornaments and amulets.

In my *Civilization of the South American Indians* I have shown that most Indian ornaments have originally had a purely magical significance, although among tribes affected by European culture they have gradually lost this significance and become real »decorations». Among the Chaco Indians also this course of development is conspicuous, for instance with regard to tattooing, body-painting, and the majority of other personal ornaments. The principles of *tattooing*, as it is practised by the Choroti, Mataco, and Tobas, have been set forth by me in a previous chapter.[1]) Tattooing is first of all closely related to scarification and bleeding, customs quite commonly practised by the Indians in all parts of South America. Blood-letting is in itself regarded as a method of purifying the human organism from evil and impure spirits. The spirits are supposed to enter the system, and especially to mix in the blood, thus giving rise to ailments of different kinds and to a state of weakness in the particular part of the body to which they have attached themselves. The Indian thinks that by bleeding that part he will rid himself of the dangerous intruder, just as he sometimes thinks it will leave his body with the mere perspiration, and this belief is naturally supported by the fact that in certain cases such purgations may really give some relief. The Chaco Indians are quite familiar with this idea. Thus among the *Choroti* it is a common thing for the men to bleed themselves with a sharp bone obtained from a certain »magical» animal or a splinter of a certain wood before certain important undertakings. Thus they say that, by drawing blood from the arm, the limb will get more strength for pulling the bow; the practice is therefore especially

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[1]) See *supra*, pp. 89 sq.

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C 783 827 [224] resorted to before going out on a hunting expedition. If the arms fails or trembles in pulling the bow, its weakness is, according to the idea of the Choroti, due to the presence of a *mohsek* in the blood; and they think that the evil demon will leave the body with the blood drawn. The same custom is practised by other tribes of the Pilcomayo. Thus C 171 Nordenskiöld noticed it among the Ashluslay, although he did not understand its real meaning. After a trying fishing or hunting expedition, he says, the Indians may be seen to pierce their arms and legs furiously with hard wooden splinters, so that the blood flows in streams; and in order to get a keener sight to find the nests of the bees they likewise prick themselves above the eyes. In both cases the idea evidently is that the demon which causes the weakness or fatigue will be driven away from the body and perhaps killed with the pointed instrument.

M 304 783 The scars left by the cuts are tended with care and shown with satisfaction, indeed with pride. The Indians showed with apparent satisfaction even those cicatrices which the *palometa* fishes had inflicted on their body with their sharp teeth when they were bathing in the river. It is clear that according to the idea of the Indians not only the bleeding purges the body from impure matter and strengthens the limbs, but that the very scars which remain after the operation possess some mysterious power to keep off evil influences, a power which is much the same as that ascribed to real tattooing marks. This Indian view is especially conspicuous in regard to an operation which the whites sometimes perform upon Indians who have come in contact with European civilization, M 751 783 304 namely, vaccination. I could myself appreciate the extraordinary importance ascribed to scars when during my stay at Esperanza I vaccinated a number of Chaco Indians who were employed as labourers at the sugar factory. The Christians probably have no remedy which the natives understand so well as this one, and they therefore as a rule submitted to the vaccine inoculation without remonstration, in fact, with pleasure. The small indelible marks which remained were regarded with wonder and admiration, and it was perfectly understood that they were a sort of warranty that the terrible disease would not attack the person wearing them.

M 302 189 Of all personal ornaments *body-painting* is the most important. All Chaco tribes practise it, and men and women alike. In the Chaco, as in other parts of South America, body-painting is essentially a custom of magical significance, as one can easily find out by considering the circumstances under which it is practised. The favourite colour of the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba 5i 12

The favourit colour of the
Indians is red or vermilion, the paint being obtained from the seeds of the plant *Bixa orellana*. But this beautiful shrub does not grow in the Gran Chaco. The Chaco tribes only obtain the paint they appreciate so much from the Indians in the north by means of intertribal commerce.

The Chaco Indians are also in the habit of blackening the face with soot or charcoal on certain occasions.

The typical way of painting the face both for men and women is either to colour the whole face and forehead red with *urucú*, or black with charcoal, or only to apply red or black spots, lines, small squares etc. to the cheeks, to the nose, round the mouth and above the eyes. The eye, which is the organ of the most important sense and the one most exposed to disorders, is generally painted with special care. Sometimes the whole organ is circumscribed by a red line, sometimes red and black lines are only drawn along the upper part of it on the spot normally occupied by the eyebrows, which, being regarded as dangerous, are always carefully pulled out; sometimes protecting tattoo-marks are applied instead of paint, especially by the women. Among the *Tobas*, persons of both sexes generally have the face and forehead painted red. But besides this typical facial painting the Toba women — seldom the men — are in the habit of making special patterns or ornaments upon their cheeks on certain occasions. The patterns used by the Tobas seem to be comparatively few in number; we do not find among them the same abundance of designs as for instance among the Choroti and the Ashluslay. Custom does not require that any special kind of pattern should be applied on a particular occasion. Every woman, for instance for a religious dance or feast, paints upon her face what designs she likes and invents at the moment.

If one asks a Toba girl why she paints her face, she will in most cases simply give the answer that it is considered beautiful, sometimes she will say that it is to please and attract the men. When I asked other people about the matter I was told that the Toba girls paint themselves when they particularly desired a man. Yet it was perfectly clear that this cannot have been the only motive for thus decorating the face, for facial painting was not practised only by unmarried girls but also by young married women, who ought not to have had any reason to put on such an outward sign for the men. As a matter of fact, on closer inquiry I found that the Toba women are in the habit of painting themselves *at the time of their menses*, in order to have a protective charm against the evil influences of which they especially then stand in fear. The ideas

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913) 1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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the body of some animal. The magical nature of these ornaments was likewise obvious.

Among the *Mataco*, who in general are more addicted to religion and superstition than the Choroti, the character of facial painting as a magical charm is more conspicuous. These Indians give facial painting different names according as it is used by men or women and depending on its colour. Thus the red painting of women is called *eruhák*, whereas the red painting of the men is called *oráittáh* (a name evidently derived from the word *aittáh* demon). The black painting is called *letáh*. It is especially used as a sign of sorrow. When a Mataco man dies, his widow and daughters blacken their faces with charcoal, regarding this as a protection against the death-demon. Similarly, for some time after a death the younger men every evening perform the dance *Katináh*, and all those taking part in the dance have their faces blackened. — The red painting again is applied as a means of giving the body strength and as a direct protection against evil spirits causing sickness.

Many *personal ornaments* of the Chaco Indians, for instance ear-tubes, necklaces, feather ornaments etc., are of the nature of charms or amulets against evil spirits. The feather ornaments most customary among the Chaco tribes are ostrich plumes, and these, as I have shown in my *Civilization of the South American Indians* have originally not been decorations in the civilized sense of the word, but magical charms, a character which they still preserve for instance among such tribes as the Chamacoco and Lenguas in Paraguay. Among the Choroti, who likewise at their great feasts in December and January wear great ostrich plumes as ornaments, this is not equally conspicuous in accordance with the fact that in many cases the Choroti culture shows traces of an incipient degeneration. On the other hand, in the description I have given before of a Mataco dance performed to conjure disease demons and in which the sorcerers had ostrich feathers fastened to the ankles, wrists, head, and waist,[1]) the »mystic» significance of these »ornaments» is quite obvious. Similarly, when another writer states that the Mataco in some parts of the Argentine Chaco not only use ostrich plumes as head-ornaments, but also apply them to the face as a sort of beard, which gives them a grotesque and ferocious appearance, or wear them round the wrists in the way of bracelets,[2]) one cannot fail to recognize superstitious motives behind these arrangements.

[1]) See *supra*, p. 137.

[2]) Baldrich, *Las comarcas vírgenes*, p. 231.

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The *ear-tubes* which are worn as ornaments for instance by the Choroti, Ashluslay and Toba-Pilagá and which consist of wooden plugs or pieces of cane, sometimes of tremendous size, are likewise nothing but magical charms or amulets. This was clearly indicated by the Choroti, who told me that the ear-discs are worn to prevent the evil spirits, the *möhsel*, from penetrating into the ears. Their hugeness and peculiarity is evidently thought to act as a deterrent upon the spirits, and there seems to be the idea that the larger they are the more efficacious. C 301 759

The Indians of the Pilcomayo use various kinds of *necklaces*, and it seems to be the rule that among the most primitive tribes, such as the Choroti and Ashluslay, they are more worn by men than by women, among the more civilized Tobas again more by women than by men. Speaking of the dress of the Choroti, I mentioned the large and costly kind of necklace consisting of snail's shells elaborately fashioned into small round buttons with a hole drilled in the centre and closely strung together. The necklace, called *lähslehuésle* in the Choroti language, is not only an ornament but at the same time a magical charm. The Choroti no doubt gave me the true explanation of their original significance when they told me that the necklace is a protection against sickness. The evil spirits, according to the idea of these Indians, preferably attach themselves to the throat or the chest, because catarrhs are very common in the Chaco during the dry season. The spirits are believed to enter into the body through the throat or the breast, but this is prevented by the protecting necklace. Hence, when a Choroti Indian sells his necklace or leaves off wearing it, his comrades say that he will most certainly soon fall ill. The same idea I found prevailing among the Mataco-Noctenes of Bolivia, where such ornaments are worn by both sexes. Thus the son of a chief, who was just at the age of puberty, one day appeared painted red in the face with *wruců*, and with a large necklace which covered the neck and the breast. When I asked the father why his son had put on these things, he answered: »It is in order that he may not fall ill«. Both among the Mataco and the Choroti it is customary that children of both sexes go totally naked up to the age of eight to ten years, but nearly always they wear collars and facial paintings which most certainly are not ornaments in the civilized sense of the word. C 301 751 M 751 301 C M 291 301 302

Among the South American Indians in general it is a common custom to tie round a limb, for instance the wrist or the leg, a leather strap or some other kind of band, professedly with a view to making the arm or the leg strong. The Chaco Indians also commonly wear such ligatures M 301 789 755

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

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and they are not even meant to be decorations. Among the Choroti it was no rare thing to see old men and women — especially when they were suffering from some pulmonary catarrh or cough, or from rheumatism — wearing a cord or strap bound tightly round the chest. The idea appeared to be that the demon who had entered into the chest and caused the evil should be forced to leave the body or at least prevented from penetrating further. On one occasion I met an old woman whose right forearm had been paralyzed, probably through a fit of apoplexy. She had a dirty woollen band tied round the arm at the wrist, and when I wanted to remove the useless thing, she would not allow it, declaring that it was »good». I soon learnt that the arm had been seized by an evil *möhsek*, and realised that the band was »good» as a sort of charm against the demon. Just as civilized people may, in a case of snake-bite, apply a ligature or cord round the bitten limb above the wound so as to prevent the poison from spreading, so the Indians consider such ligatures as preventive of evil spirits. Among the Choroti the band is not put on with any ceremonies, but probably the material itself is supposed to have some mysterious power. However this may be, in these cords or bands tied round the breast or the arms, we have, I think, the most simple specimens of bracelets, girdles, and other magical ornaments of the same type used by the Indians.

In addition to the magical ornaments here touched upon the Chaco Indians use various kinds of amulets and charms consisting of the tusks or claws of the jaguar or other wild animals, in feathers of birds, mussel shells etc., but I shall not dwell upon this side of the practical religion of the Indians. What I have still to pay particular attention to are their funeral rites and ceremonies.

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

a) *Conception*

831 Sperm is located in the knee. In order to cause an abun-
262 dant secretion of sperm, it is advisable to drink broth and milk and to eat chickens. It is important not to drink the broth of a bird called *čana* for the child would then be lazy. In order to have healthy children it is highly recommended that the broth of an aquatic bird called *aṣkan* be drunk;
842 The child is formed by the sperm which is assimilated into milk. The »milk» coagulates and fills up the matrix, thus do children form themselves gradually. The presence of the child in a mother's womb prevents the blood from
[843] flowing and menstruation stops. Pregnancy lasts eight months.

842 It is impossible for a man not to procreate children. Only
789 women can be sterile. Sterility may occur because the woman has been stopped up by a medicine-man, thus man's »milk» can no longer penetrate into her bosom. This may be accounted for in two ways. A woman may ask a medicine-man to make her sterile, or a bad medicine-man may make a woman sterile in order to harm her family. Sterility may be cured by a medicine-man, but the task is not easy and there are few who will attempt it.

b) *Pregnancy and Childbirth*

843 A pregnant woman works but little, she most eat sufficient, but not too much, food. The child, still in the mother's womb, sucks the food absorbed by its father and mother and if they were to eat too much the child would get fat and would be unable to come out. The husband of an expectant mother must give up certain kinds or work. He cannot use a knife or an axe for the strokes of any cutting instrument might kill or wound the child. He must not wear boots lest the child's legs be crooked. If he keeps his hat on his head the skull of the child will be flat. He must not write with ink lest the child's face be covered with marks.

756 The witch doctors have, also, the power of turning themselves into animals or fire that licks up the underbrush in their path.

In order to overcome diseases, the witch doctors make use of [825] small wands which the spirits have given them; they use also the wings of several birls (yulo, carancho).

Animals as well as men can be treated by the witch doctors. An informant described to me the treatment which was given to a horse. The witch doctor first recited an enchantment and then applied suction to the horse's rump until he was able to extract a small piece of wood which he said was the cause of the malady.

[754] Some witch doctors are extremely dangerous. They start by devouring dogs and then go on to attack men. It is almost impossible to put an end to their criminal career for they revive if they are killed and if they are burned to death they will still return.

[562] Some women can become witch doctors, although they enjoy far less prestige than do the man. Their vocation is made apparent by the following signs: they spend hours on end crouched over the ground, continually swaying back and forth, finally they make an attempt to flee into the underbrush and their strength is such that several men cannot restrain them. Once off in the bush, they tear off their [17] clothes and climb a tree, where they remain for several days swaying and singing.

Magic

● 789 609 The Matacos of San Andres complain bitterly that their neighbors the Tobas of the Pilcomayo river are great practitioners of magic. During the period of my stay at their village a Toba arrived to visit one of his friends. Not finding him at home he went to several huts in the hope of finding him. When he left, the Matacos accused him of witchcraft and said that his comings and goings were only to gather leavings (hair, nail parings, pieces of cloth, etc.) belonging to the people he had visited. The fact is that many of the persons whose houses the Toba visited became sick, which only confirmed the Matacos' suspicions. Nevertheless no sanction whatever came from this to the supposed criminal.

5:Nordenskiöld E-5,1 (1908-1909, 1913) 1920
SF10 Chiriguano SF10
Chane SF8
Mataco SF7
South American Indians S3
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171*
C
Ce
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dance masks from the Chané. Where the latter learnt their use it is at present impossible to say.

The map 12 and table 15 show us the distribution of the mask in S. America.

The places at which burial masks have been found are indicated in the map by squares. In making out this list I have followed PATER SCHMIDT, to whose statements I am able to make a few additions. The fact of the Ona and Yahgan Indians having masks seems to prove that their use is very ancient in S. America. At a ceremony of exorcism among the Mataco I saw some men with pieces of cloth hanging over their faces. I take this to be the most primitive kind of mask.

Table 15 showing the Distribution in S. America. (map 12) of dancing masks and other masks.

3. Tapiete, R. M. L. 216.
4. Chiriguano, R. M. E. 601.
5. Chané.
8. Lengua, GRUBB Plate P. 180.
10. Araucanians, GUEVARA (1) Fig. 5; PATER SCHMIDT P. 1057.
11. Chamacoco, PATER SCHMIDT P. 1060.
13. Karajá, KRAUSE P. 331.
18. Quichua, ACOSTA T. 2, P. 225; SARMIENTO DE GAMBOA P. 68 (Burial masks); COBO V. 4, P. 102. »Y cada atambor tocaban cuatro indios principales vestidos de muy particular librea con camisetas coloradas hasta los pies con rapacejos blancos y colorados; encima se ponían unas pieles de leones desollados enteros y las cabezas vacías en las cuales les tenían puestas unas patenas, zarcillos en las orejas, y en lugar de sus dientes naturales, otros del mismo tamaño y forma.»
19. Aymara. Mestizos, Bolivia. Quite common during the carnival.